

Margaret Roberts THATCHER

UNITED KINGDOM

*Prime Minister
(since May 1979)*

*Addressed as:
Prime Minister*

Leader of the Conservative Party since 1975, Margaret Thatcher is the first woman ever to serve as Prime Minister of Britain or of any European country. She is a self-proclaimed crusader for free enterprise, free trade, and the economic revival of Great Britain. In her public comments she has frequently declared her support for a strong NATO, an independent British nuclear deterrent, and the need for balanced and verifiable arms control measures.



The daughter of a grocer and a seamstress, Thatcher won a scholarship to Somerville College, Oxford, and graduated with honors in chemistry in 1947. While there she was president of the University Conservative Association. After working for four years as a research chemist in an industrial firm, she began to study law, specializing in tax legislation and patents. A member of Parliament since 1959, Thatcher has held several important government positions during her career, including those of joint parliamentary secretary to the Ministry of Pensions and National Insurance (1961-64), Secretary of State for Education and Science (1970-74), and shadow deputy chancellor of the exchequer (1974-75). Thatcher visited the United States in 1967 on a Foreign Leader Grant. On later trips she met with Presidents Gerald Ford (1975) and Jimmy Carter (1977, 1979). She renewed an acquaintance with President Ronald Reagan, whom she has known for several years, on a state visit to Washington in February 1981. In June 1982 Thatcher addressed the UN Special Session on Disarmament in New York and then traveled to Washington, where she again met with President Reagan. In January 1983 she became the first Prime Minister in British history to visit the Falkland Islands. In May she attended the Economic Summit in Williamsburg.

Thatcher, 57, enjoys listening to the music of Bach, Beethoven, and Chopin and reading detective stories, historical novels, and biographies. Her husband, Denis, is a retired oil company executive. The Thatchers have 30-year-old twins, Mark and Carol.

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